

to incorporate each of these recommendations by reference in this letter, and add some additional thoughts.

At the outset, we wish to point out that in ASTA's view a program to promote additional tourism from other countries to the United States can be effective only if there is no imposition of direct or indirect restrictions on the right of U.S. citizens to travel freely to destinations of their own choosing abroad. The countries which are currently sending us the greatest number of tourists are those which depend very heavily themselves on income from United States tourism.

The success of a program to promote tourism to and within the United States depends upon a close working relationship between government and private industry. The government participation could come about in various forms, but must, in our view, include a substantial increase in funds available to the United States Travel Service so that it may expand its promotional efforts. Furthermore, more direct participation by the government in the promotion of attractive tour programs and other projects would be most effective.

For this reason, ASTA supports the proposal of Congressman Reuss contained in H.R. 14607, the travel stamp incentive plan. We note that more than 20 members of the House of Representatives already have co-sponsored this proposal. ASTA also supports S. 2907 introduced by Senator Javits on February 1 and co-sponsored by eleven Senators from both political parties. We would hope that your Committee would urge the appropriate Congressional committees to give these bills prompt and favorable consideration.

Industry participation in the program on a quick and effective basis could best be attained by close coordination among existing travel organizations in the United States, and by looking to these organizations to dedicate their financial resources, promotional efforts, and organizational ability thus effectively to implement the many suggestions which have been made to your Committee.

The process of attracting more of our foreign friends to visit the United States is a three-step one:

First: The stimulation of a desire in the minds of potential travelers to want to visit this country. Through the increased promotional efforts of the United States Travel Service, expanded advertising programs by private industry and increased availability and distribution of information through travel films, news article, editorials and other media, this objective can be obtained.

As we previously indicated, ASTA will urge its foreign-born members to participate in promotion programs in their home countries when they return for periodic visits. In addition, chapters of ASTA occasionally schedule meetings in foreign countries and these could be used as an effective vehicle to promote tourism to the United States by cooperation with local travel agents.

Second: Improved organization and packaging of individual and group travel arrangements and tours to and within the United States at a price level accessible to a greater number of foreigners. Many ideas have been advanced to accomplish this objective and steps have been taken to implement at least one major one, the expanded use of directional air fares to this country.

Suggestions in addition to those previously mentioned which we feel have merit include machinery to allow citizens of other countries to buy American dollars at U.S. Embassies at a favorable exchange rate. Another is through the use of federal funds or industry contributions, to underwrite that portion of a tour operator's expense which is included in the preparation and sale of a tour in the United States, thus allowing him to offer the tour for sale in Europe at cost.

Third: The actual bringing together of a potential overseas traveler with the sales outlet of a travel agent or transportation company within his country and facilitating the purchase, use and enjoyment of the transportation, hotel, sight-seeing and related services in the United States.

Effective methods of accomplishing this, in addition to the many previously mentioned, would include the following:

Enlist the assistance of experienced available personnel employed by both U.S. and foreign air carriers to undertake a program of visiting areas outside the United States where the tourist potential is the greatest so that they might promote the sale of travel and tourism to the United States.

In addition, airlines could help eliminate the language barrier by offering the services of their bilingual employees to serve in reception desks or to accompany groups within the United States. These employees could work with tour operators and they could coordinate with travel agent employees in the foreign language program referred to in our earlier letter.